to his Great Master; saying only, *The Lord rebuke thee.* So should every good Man in his private Capacity, behave himself: If Slander and Detraction, should beset him, let him not wholly and immediately despise it: The worst of People, pretend to do so: But let him search into his Conscience impartially, call himself to a strict Examination by the Law of God, and each Commandment of it: And if he find himself Guilty in any respect, let him Repent immediately: But, if nothing rise up against him there, if nothing be found amiss *within*, no matter what the whole World says: And O! that it were written in every Heart! engraven deeply in every Memory, that *it is not by what others say of us, but by our own Actions, that we shall be judg'd at the last Day.*

This wou'd give a good Man Courage and Constancy, to support Calumny and Slander; and ~~and~~ while he rejoices in the Absolution, in the Applause of a good Conscience, and contemns Scandal as much, as he wou'd do Flattery, make him march on boldly and steadily in his Duty. Such Men indeed, are guarded by watchful Providence; the Wicked may approach, but not approach to hurt them; the Viper may reach their Hand, yet not be permitted to fasten there, but may be shaken off immediately into the Fire.

But let not this be any Comfort to those that are any ways Guilty, or really Vitious. Let not such People, when they suffer under evil Report, or

are

are censured justly for their Crimes; think to come off with a formal Look, and by saying Gravely, that they thank God they have a good Conscience, and therefore care not what the World says. Alas! How easily are such People discover'd, if but a little observ'd: They have the Audaciousness of Stubborn Guilt, rather than the Easiness of secure Innocence; sometimes they are complaining and clearing of themselves to those who are not concern'd, or who know little of the Matter, and wondering how People can be so Uncharitable; sometimes again they are in the greatest Rage, despising and threatning all the World; but always pleas'd with the dullest Flattery. Yet, suppose that these People could impose upon the World: Can they ever escape the Knowledg of God? Can they ever avoid the Reproaches of those Consciences which they Appeal to? Will not these suggest to them, that 'tis not Scandal but Justice that they suffer under; and therefore, that it is not Constancy, but Impudence to despise it? Will not these upbraid them with their dissembling with God and Man, by their Falshood and Hypocrisie? and haunt them still in their Solitudes and Retirements, though they carry it off so confidently in Publick?

Whereas the honest upright Man, is always settled and compos'd; He cannot chuse whither he will be Rail'd at, but He can chuse whither he will be Flatter'd or no; and of the two, had rather be thought

thought a Murtherer, than told that he is a God.

Besides, however ill us'd he is Abroad, his suffering Innocence and Injur'd Honour, will afford him Comfort at Home; and though he be ruin'd in his Fortune, and deserted by his Friends; he may always safely retire to his good Conscience, and always boldly Appeal to his God. And without question, this Evenness of Temper, is one of the best ways to lessen, if not to conquer this Evil. A Virtuous and Good Man unmov'd by Scandal and Defamation, calm and serene in the midst of Obloquy; nay, Curses themselves: After compar'd by *Antoninus* [*lib.* 8. §. 43.] to a smooth and transparent Stream, which, though you throw never so much Dirt into it, retains still the Purity of its Source, and clears it self by flowing on. And so indeed, it happens very often: When Justice and Integrity, are the Fountains of all our Actions; a steady course of Virtue will recover a Sullyed Reputation, because a continu'd course of good Actions, will justifie those which have been question'd before. This I say it does very often, and wou'd do so always, were not the wretched Stream of Life so very short. But then to make amends for this, it falls into Eternity; that Boundless! but to good Men, that Calm, that Pacifick Ocean! which no Detraction reaches, which no Malice can ever disturb; but where happy Saints and Angels

shall

ſhall be always Bleſſed, with Holy Raptures of mutual Charity and Love; and rewarded with an Eternal Union, with one another and their God!

In a Word: As every good and honeſt Man wou'd abhor being guilty himſelf of Flattery or Detraction; ſo if he happens to be attackt by either, let him collect himſelf within his own Virtue, and repel the vain Attempt with generous Diſdain. And particularly, as to unjuſt Defamation: If he ſuffers this for the ſake of his Religion and Integrity, let him know that it is for his Saviour's ſake, and therefore that it ought to be the occaſion of Joy, rather than Trouble to him: That this is no new thing, but what has happen'd to the beſt of Men, and what may turn unſpeakably to his Advantage. Wherefore let him hold faſt his Integrity but a little while, a little longer, and Death ſhall ſet him free, and the Righteous God, the God of Truth and Juſtice, ſhall be his exceeding great Reward.

We have our Saviours own Word for it. [*Mat. 5. cap. v. 11, 12.*] With which I ſhall conclude, and let every honeſt Man apply it boldly to himſelf. *Bleſſed are you, when Men ſhall Revile you, and Perſecute you, and ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſely*; remember it muſt be falſely, *for my ſake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you:*

FINIS.

An Acquaintance with God the best Support under Afflictions.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D before the

QUEEN

At St. *JAMES's*,

OCTOBER 31. 1708.

By FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D.D.
Dean of *Carliſle*, Preacher at the *Rolls*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

Publiſh'd by Her Majeſty's Special Command.

LONDON:
Printed by *J. B.* for JONAH BOWYER, at the *Roſe* in *Ludgate-ſtreet*, near the Weſt-end of St. *Paul's* Church, 1708.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D before the

QUEEN

At St. JAMES's,

OCTOBER 31. 1703.

By FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D.D.
Dean of Carlisle, Preacher at the Rolls, and
Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

Printed by J. R. for Jonah Bowyer, at the Rose
in Ludgate-Street, near the West end of St. Paul's
Church, 1703.

Job XXII. 21.

Acquaint now thy self with Him, and be at Peace.

THE Exceeding Corruption and Folly of Man is in nothing more manifeſt, than in his Averſeneſs to entertain any Friendſhip or Familiarity with God; tho' he was fram'd for that very End, and endu'd with Faculties fitted to attain it; tho' he ſtands, and cannot but be ſenſible that he ſtands, in the utmoſt want of it; tho' he be invited, and encourag'd to it, frequently, and earneſtly, by God himſelf; and tho' it be his Chief Honour, Advantage, and Happineſs, as well as his Duty, to comply with thoſe Invitations.

In all Caſes, where the Body is affected with Pain, or Sickneſs, we are for-

ward enough to look out for Remedies, to liſten greedily to every one that ſuggeſts them, and, upon the leaſt hopes of Succeſs, from the Reports of others, immediately to apply them. And yet notwithſtanding that we find and feel our Souls diſorder'd and reſtleſs, toſs'd and diſquieted by various Paſſions, diſtracted between contrary Ends and Intereſts, ever ſeeking Happineſs in the Enjoyments of this World, and ever miſſing what they ſeek; notwithſtanding that we are aſſur'd from other Mens Experience, and from our own Inward Convictions, that the only way of regulating theſe Diſorders is, to call off our Minds from too cloſe an Attention to the things of Senſe, and to imploy them often in a ſweet Intercourſe with our Maker, the Author of our Being, and Fountain of all our Eaſe and Happineſs; yet are we ſtrangely backward to lay hold of this ſafe, this only Method of Cure: We go

on ſtill nouriſhing the Diſtemper under which we groan, and chooſe rather to feel the Pain, than to apply the Remedy. Excellent, therefore, was the Advice of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, when, in the midſt of his great Troubles and Preſſures, he thus beſpoke him, *Acquaint thy ſelf now with Him* (*i. e.* with God) *and be at Peace*: Take this Opportunity of improving thy *Acquaintance* with *God*, to which he always, but *now* eſpecially invites thee; Make the true Uſe of thoſe Afflictions, which His Hand, mercifully ſevere, hath been pleas'd to lay upon thee; and be led, by the means of them, tho' thou haſt endeavour'd to know and ſerve Him already, to know and ſerve Him ſtill better; to deſire, and love him more: Calm the Diſorders of thy Mind by Reflections on His Paternal Goodneſs and Tenderneſs; on the Wiſdom, and Equity, and abſolute Rectitude of all His Proceedings: Comfort thy ſelf with ſuch

Thoughts at all times, but chiefly at that time, when all Earthly Comforts fail thee; Then do thou particularly retreat to these Considerations, and shelter thy self under them; --- *Acquaint now thy self with Him, and be at Peace.*

The Words, therefore, will suggest Matter not unfit for our Devout Meditation, under the Three following Heads; wherein I shall consider,

I. What this Scripture-Phrase of *acquainting our selves with God* implies, and wherein the Duty recommended by it particularly consists.

II. How Reasonable, Necessary, and Desirable a Duty it is, as on many other Accounts, so especially on This, That it is the only True Way towards attaining a perfect *Tranquillity* and *Rest* of Mind, *Acquaint thy self with Him, AND BE AT PEACE.* Which will lead me also to shew, in the

III.

III. Place, That the most proper *Season* for such a Religious Exercise of our Thoughts is, when any *Trouble*, or *Calamity* overtakes us, *Acquaint thy self NOW with Him.*

I. We are to consider, What this Scripture-Phrase of *Acquainting our selves with God*, implies, and wherein the Duty, recommended by it, particularly consists. The Phrase it self occurs, I think, no where else in Holy Writ; however, the true meaning of it is very Obvious and Easie.

We are prone by Nature to engage our selves in too close and strict an Acquaintance with the Things of this World, which immediately and strongly strike our Senses; with the Business, the Pleasures, and the Amusements of it; we give our selves up too greedily to the pursuit, and immerse our selves too deeply in the Enjoyment of them;

and

and contract at laſt ſuch an Intimacy and Familiarity with them, as makes it difficult and irkſome for us to call off our Minds to a better Employment, and to think intenſly on any thing beſides them. To check and correct this ill Tendency, it is requiſite that we ſhould *acquaint our ſelves with God*; that we ſhould frequently diſengage our Hearts from Earthly Purſuits, and fix them on Divine Things; that we ſhould apply our ſelves to ſtudy the bleſſed Nature and Perfections of God, and to procure lively and vigorous Impreſſions of his perpetual Preſence with us, and Inſpection over us; that we ſhould contemplate earneſtly and reverently the Works of Nature and Grace, by which he manifeſts himſelf to us; the inſcrutable Ways of his Providence, and all the wonderful Methods of his dealing with the Sons of Men; That we ſhould inure our ſelves to ſuch Thoughts, 'till

they have work'd up our Souls into that filial Awe and Love of Him, that humble and implicit Dependence upon Him, which is the Root and Principle of all manner of Goodneſs; 'till we have made our Duty, in this reſpect, our Pleaſure, and can addreſs our ſelves to Him, on all occaſions, with Readineſs and Delight; imparting all our Wants, and expreſſing all our Fears, and opening all our Griefs to Him, with that holy Freedom and Confidence, to which the Saints and true Servants of God are entitled, having *received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, Abba Father!* In this Senſe ought we to *acquaint our ſelves with God*, to *ſet him always before us*, as the Scripture elſewhere ſpeaks; to *draw near to him*, and *to delight in approaching him.*

But this is only a *General* Account of what our *Acquaintance with God* implies: It may be uſeful to mention ſome *Parti-*

ticulars alſo, wherein it chiefly conſiſts; and to ſay ſomewhat diſtinctly upon Each of them.

In order to begin, and improve Human Friendſhips, *Five* Things are principally requiſite; *Knowledge*, *Acceſs*, a *Similitude of Manners*, an entire *Confidence*, and *Love*: and by Theſe alſo the Divine Friendſhip, of which we are treating, muſt be cemented, and upheld.

The firſt Step towards an *acquaintance with God*, is, a due *Knowledge* of him: I mean not a Speculative Knowledge, built on abſtracted Reaſonings about his Nature and Eſſence; ſuch as Philoſophical Minds often buſie themſelves in, without reaping from thence any advantage towards regulating their Paſſions, or improving their Manners: But I mean a Practical Knowledge of thoſe Attributes of his, which invite us nearly to approach him, and cloſely to unite our ſelves to him; a thorough Senſe, and

Vital Experience of his Paternal Care over us, and Concern for us; of his unspotted Holiness, his inflexible Justice, his unerring Wisdom, and his diffusive Goodness; a Representation of him to our selves, under those affecting Characters of a *Creator*, and a *Redeemer*, an *Observer*, and a *Pattern*, a *Law-giver*, and a *Judge*; which are aptest to incline our Wills, and to raise our Affections towards him, and either to awe, or allure us into a stricter Performance of every Branch of our Duty. These, and the like *Moral*, and *Relative* Perfections of the Deity, are most necessary, and most easie to be understood by us; upon the least Reflection and Enquiry we cannot miss of them; tho' the oftner, and more attentively we consider them, the better, and more perfectly still shall we know them.

The Acquaintance, thus begun, cannot continue, without frequent *Access* to

him; without *ſeeking his Face continually* (as the good Pſalmiſt's Phraſe is) in all the Methods of Spiritual Addreſs; in Contemplation, and Prayer; in his Word, and in his Ordinances; in the Publick Service of the Sanctuary, and in the Private Devotions of the Cloſet; and chiefly in the latter of theſe, which are, on ſeveral accounts, moſt uſeful towards promoting this holy Correſpondence. By theſe Means, and in theſe Duties, is he to be approach'd, and found; and, notwithſtanding our infinite Diſtance, will *draw near to Them who* thus *draw near to Him*, and ſhew himſelf to be a *God* that *is at Hand*, and *not afar off*.

But in vain ſhall we approach him, unleſs we endeavour to be *like* him: A Similitude of Nature and Manners (in ſuch a degree as we are capable of) muſt tie the holy Knot, and rivet the Friendſhip between us. Whomſoever we deſire

desire to approve, we labour also to conform our selves to; to be *not only almost, but altogether such as they are*, if it be possible; that so They, seeing Themselves in Us, may like Us, for the sake of Themselves, and go out (as it were) to meet, and embrace their Own Image and Resemblance. Would we then be admitted into an Acquaintance with God? Let us study to resemble him: We must be *partakers of a Divine Nature*, in order to partake of this high Privilege and Alliance! *For what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness? and what Communion hath Light with Darkness?*

Yet farther, One Essential Ingredient in all true Friendships, is, a firm unshaken *Reliance* on Him who is our Friend. Have we such towards God? Do we entirely Trust in him? Do our Souls lean on him, as a Child that is weaned of his Mother? Do we resign our selves, and our Affairs, absolutely to be dispos'd of by him? and think all our Concerns

safer

safer in His Hands, than in our Own? and resolve to believe every thing to be best and fittest for us, which He sees best should befal us? Are we still under his Rod, without a Murmur? without Despondency of Mind, and without charging God foolishly? Do we unbosom all our Secrets to Him, and neither endeavour, nor pretend to hide any thing that passeth in the depth of our Hearts from him? Do we inquire of Him for His Advice and Assistance in every thing? and hearken to what our Lord God shall say to us, either by the Inward Whispers of our Consciences, or the Outward Ministry of His Word, or the Awakening Calls of His Providence? and give heed diligently to fulfil all the least Intimations of His good Pleasure, that are any ways made known to us? — Then have we entred deep into, and advanc'd far in that Holy Intimacy which the Text recommends: O well is it with us! Happy are we, and shall we be!

How-

However, *yet one thing more we lack* to be perfect; *Love*, which is the *fulfilling of* this *Law* of Friendſhip, the ſureſt Teſt, and moſt exalted Improvement of it.

Let us conſider, therefore, Whether we do indeed *love the Lord our God, with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength*: Whether our Approaches to Him are always Sweet and Refreſhing; and we are uneaſie, and impatient under any long diſcontinuance of our Converſation with Him; and retire into our Cloſet from the Crowd, in order to meet Him whom our Soul loveth, with a Pleaſure far exceeding Theirs, who *Chant to the Sound of the Viol*, and are *joyful in the Strength of New Wine*: Whether our Heart burns within us, at the peruſal of his Holy Word: and the Reliſh and Savour of it upon our Minds be ſuch, as that, in compariſon of it, all the moſt Exquiſite Humane Compoſures ſeem low and mean, flat and inſipid to us:

Whether

Whether we have an even, and ever-burning Zeal for his Honour and Service; and are always contriving ſomewhat, and doing ſomewhat to promote His Intereſt, without any immediate regard to our Own: Whether we delight to make mention of His Name, and to make our Boaſt in His Praiſe, even among thoſe who fear Him not, and know Him not; and to render our Goodneſs and our Devotion Exemplary, in proportion to the Vices and the Irreligion of others: Finally, Whether our Love of Life, and our Complacence in the good Things of it, ſlackens every day, and even our Dread of Death is in ſome meaſure vanquiſh'd; and we do, whilſt we are contemplating the Joys of another State, almoſt *deſire to be diſſolv'd, and to be with Chriſt*, and groan under thoſe Earthly Clogs and Bars, that incumber and obſtruct us in our flight towards Him, and hinder our Mind from exerting with freedom all its Faculties and Powers, on the Supreme

Object

Object of its Desires, Hopes, and Endeavours? When we perceive our selves to be, after this manner, *rooted and grounded in Love*, and to abound in these Genuine and Blessed Fruits of it; behold! Then is our Spirit advanc'd to the nearest degree of Union with the great Father of Spirits, of which it is capable on this side Heaven; and we are, indeed, (according to what is said of faithful *Abraham* in holy Writ) *the Friends of God.*

Thus have I shewn you, What it is, to *acquaint our selves with God*, and wherein this *Acquaintance* chiefly consists; to wit, in an intimate *Knowledge* of Him, a frequency of *Access* to Him, a *Conformity* and Likeness of Temper and Manners, an Humble and implicit *Relyance* upon Him, and an ardent *Affection* of Soul towards Him. I proceed now, in the

II. Place, to consider, How *Reasonable*, *Desirable*, and *Necessary* a thing it is, thus to acquaint our selves with God, as, on many other accounts, so particularly

on This; That it is the only true Way towards attaining a perfect *Tranquillity* and *Reſt* of Mind; *Acquaint thy ſelf with him, AND BE AT PEACE.*

Honour, Profit, and Pleaſure, are the three great Idols, to which the Men of this World bow; and One, or All of which, is generally aimed at, in every *Human* Friendſhip they make: and yet, tho' nothing can be more *Honourable, Profitable,* or *Pleaſing* to us, than an Acquaintance with *God*, we ſtand off from it, and will not be tempted even by theſe Motives, tho' appearing to us with the utmoſt Advantage, to embrace it.

Can any thing improve, and purifie, and exalt our Natures more than ſuch a Converſation as this; wherein our Spirits, mounting on the Wings of Contemplation, Faith, and Love, aſcend up to the firſt Principle, and Cauſe of all things; ſee, admire, and taſt his ſurpaſſing Excellence, and feel the Quickning-Power and Influence of it; 'till we

ur ſelves, thus *with open Face beholding, as in Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, are chang'd* (gradually, and inſenſibly chang'd) *into the ſame mage, from Glory to Glory*, from one degree Perfection, and Likeneſs, to another? What an *Honour* is it to us, that God ſhould lmit us into ſuch a Bleſſed Participation of mſelf? that he ſhould give us Minds capae of ſuch an Intercourſe with the Supreme, niverſal Mind? and ſhall we be capable of without enjoying it?

In what Converſation can we ſpend our houghts and Time more *profitably*, than in his? To whom can we betake our ſelves, ith greater Expectations to ſucceed in our ddreſſes? Upon whom can we rely with more curity and confidence? Is he not our moſt lunificent Benefactor, our Wiſeſt Counſellor, d moſt Potent Protector and Friend? both ble, and Willing to do every thing for us, at it becomes either Us to ask, or Him to ant? Are not the Bleſſings both of this orld, and the next, in his diſpoſal? and is t his Favour and Good-will the only ſure

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Title that we can plead to them? and sha
we spend our time therefore in cultivatin
useless and perishing Acquaintances here be
low, to the neglecting That which is of th
vastest Concern to us, and upon which ou
everlasting Welfare depends? shall we no
rather say, with St. *Peter*; *Lord, to whom sha
we go? Thou hast the Words of Etern
Life.*

O! the sweet Contentment, the Tranqui
lity, and profound Rest of Mind that *He* en
joys, who is a Friend of God, and to whom
God [therefore] is a Friend; who hath gi
ven loose from all meaner Pursuits, and is re
gardless of all Lower Advantages, that inte
fere with his Great Design of Knowing, an
Loving God, and being known, and belov
by him; who lives as in his Sight alway
looks up to him in every Step of his Con
duct, imitates him to the best of his Powe
believes him without doubt, and obeys hi
without Reserve; desires to do nothing bu
what is agreeable to his Will, and resolv
to fear nothing beyond, or beside his Di

 pleasur

pleasure: In a word, who hath resign'd all his Passions and Appetites to him, all his Faculties, and Powers; and given up his Soul to be possess'd by him, without a Rival. Surely such an one hath within his Breast, that Divine *Peace, which passeth all Understanding*; is inconceivable, by Those who are strangers to it, and inutterable even by Those upon whom it rests. In vain doth the Scornful Voluptuary ask for an account of it, which can never be given him; for it hath no Alliance with any of the Pleasures of Sense, in which he delights; nor hath he any Ideas, by which the Perception of it may be convey'd to him: It may make the Prophet's Challenge, and say, *To what will you liken me? and wherewithal will you compare me?* This *Peace* is to be *understood*, only by being enjoy'd; and such an *Acquaintance with God* as the Text recommends, is the only Means of enjoying it. But I hasten, in the

III. And